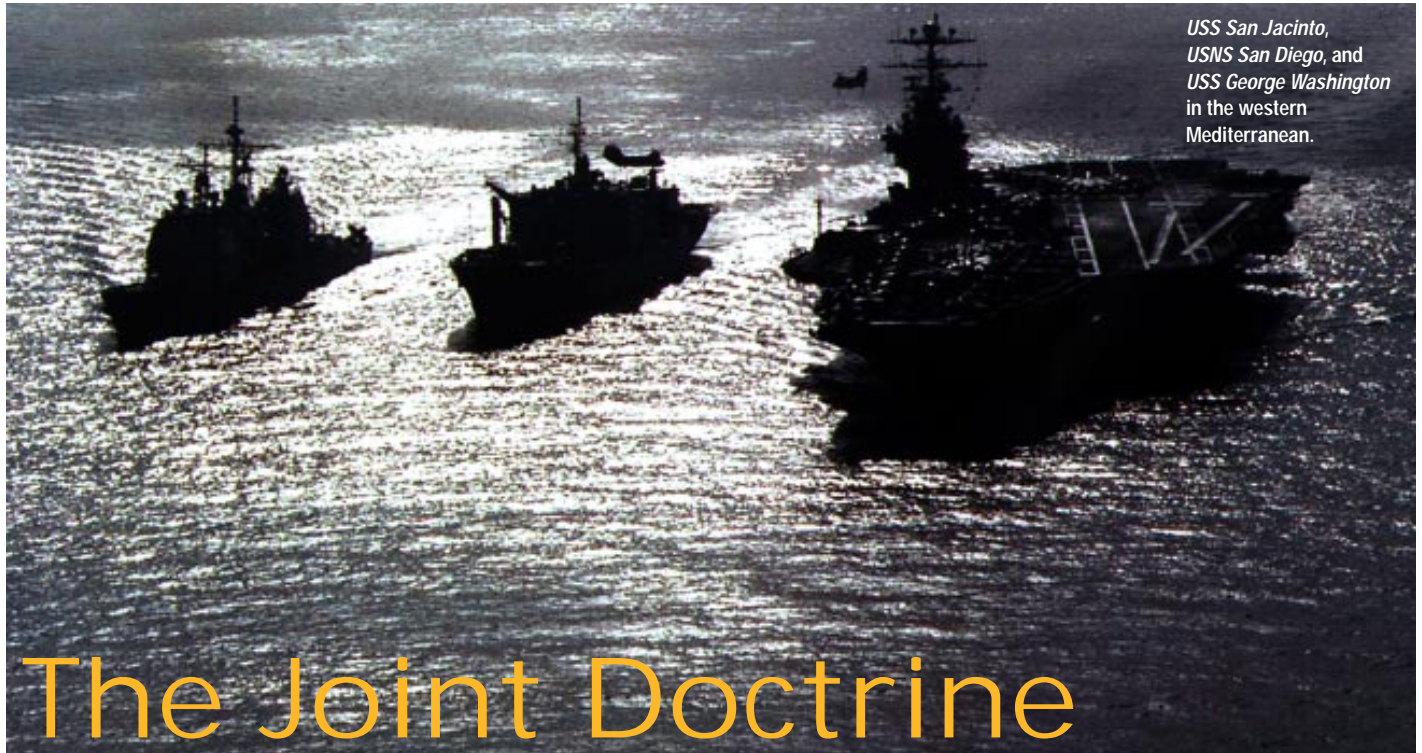


*As we change the way we fight, joint doctrine will remain the foundation that fundamentally shapes the way we think about and train for joint military operations.*

—John M. Shalikashvili



USS San Jacinto,  
USNS San Diego, and  
USS George Washington  
in the western  
Mediterranean.

U.S. Navy (Jim Virdine)

# The Joint Doctrine Development System

## EDITOR'S Note

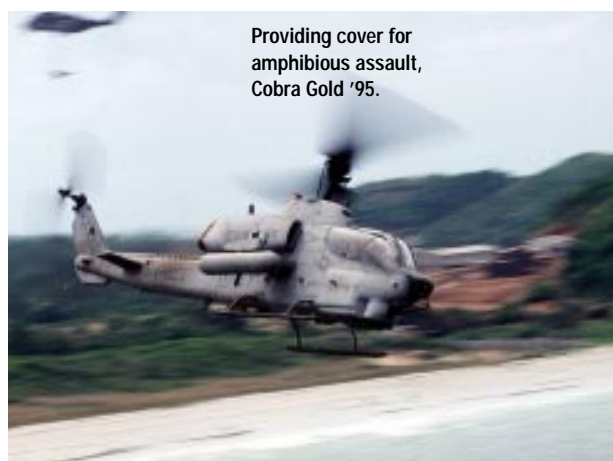
Joint doctrine has made significant progress since the Goldwater-Nichols Act made the Chairman responsible for its development. Today, the joint doctrine development process is regarded as the most advanced in the world. It has become the thread that binds together the combat power of the services to yield an authentic joint effort. This achievement is attributable to the exercise of institutional responsibility for joint doctrine by the Joint Staff and the Joint Warfighting Center. Both organizations, working in concert with the combatant commands and services under the joint doctrine master plan, are dedicated to the continuing refinement of joint publications.

Major General David A. Sawyer, USAF, is the director of operational planning and interoperability (J-7), Joint Staff.

By DAVID A. SAWYER

The United States approaches the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the preeminent military force in the world. This primacy is based in large measure on hardware and capability. No other nation can field such combat power for any type of military operation. Yet combat power alone does not guarantee success. The thread that binds combat power together to create this preeminent force is joint doctrine—the fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces from two or

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Joint Combat Camera (Steve Thurov)

more services in coordinated action toward a common objective.

It is not pretentious to claim that our current joint doctrine hierarchy is the most advanced in the world. With the collapse of the Soviet system and its Warsaw Pact forces, no other military expends as much effort in the doctrine development process. The professionals who developed the system

### the joint doctrine development process established new definitions, procedures, and structures

understood that correctly applying technology and disparate forces through effective joint employment concepts is a force multiplier. But comprehensive joint doctrine development has not always been a given. The system that produces it has grown over ten years from a haphazard and loosely coordinated process to a formal and sound one. This article contrasts former and present methods of development, recalls legislative and organizational revisions that led to today's system, and shows how it meets its goals through the current joint publication system.

#### Doctrinal Voids

Congress directed a profound reorganization of the defense establishment in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. A key element of that law tasked the Chairman with "developing doctrine for the joint employment of the

Armed Forces." This was a significant change because no single individual or organization had been previously responsible for joint doctrine. Joint pubs, then known as JCS pubs, were created in relative isolation under guidelines that formerly governed Joint Staff actions. There was no standard process for initiating, coordinating, approving, or revising joint doctrine. Moreover, there was no requirement for congruity between joint and service doctrine, nor was the difference between joint and service doctrine clear. Significantly, no mechanism incorporated the expertise, knowledge, requirements, etc., of unified and specified commanders in the doctrine they were expected to use. In addition, the system had no means of either identifying conceptual voids or addressing them. Doctrine was published without being formally evaluated, so that its validity might not ever be tested except in actual combat—obviously an unacceptable risk. Specific issues that are today

recognized as critical in combat performance (such as intelligence, logistics, airspace control, space operations, etc.) were not addressed in joint doctrine.

Before Goldwater-Nichols there had been an earlier attempt to bring rigor to joint doctrine development and address some key doctrinal voids in warfighting. That effort, known as the joint doctrine pilot program, was initiated in 1983. It was implemented by the Chairman and designed to capitalize on the experience of CINCs by designating them to develop key doctrine publications and coordinate them with the other CINCs and all the services. Four projects were proposed and the developing CINCs assigned, with topics such as theater air defense and strategic air support to maritime operations. However, by the time Goldwater-Nichols was enacted some

three years later only one project had been approved.

As a result of that law and DOD directives, the Chairman was authorized to develop and approve joint doctrine. Toward that end, doctrine was coordinated with the services and combatant commands to ensure that those organizations that would implement it participated in development. The Chairman created the Directorate for Operational Plans and Interoperability (J-7), Joint Staff, with a division dedicated to act as a joint doctrine caretaker. In addition, the Joint Doctrine Center was also established under J-7 at MacDill Air Force Base and later moved to the Tidewater area of Virginia. Its mission was to "assist in improving the combat effectiveness of joint U.S. military forces and unified and specified commands through the analysis, development, and assessment of joint and combined doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures." The Joint Doctrine Center is now a division of the Joint Warfighting Center at Fort Monroe to support the unified commands, services, Joint Staff, and defense agencies.

With organizational structures in place, a joint doctrine master plan was instituted to ensure an effective development process, identify major doctrinal voids, initiate projects to fill them, and reorganize the joint pub hierarchy. The process was included in Joint Pub 1-01, *Joint Publication System Joint Doctrine and Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures Development Program*, which appeared in April 1988. It outlined principles, guidelines, and a conceptual framework to initiate, validate, develop, coordinate, evaluate, approve, and maintain joint doctrine as well as joint tactics, techniques, and procedures (JTTP) and joint technical publications. Joint Pub 1-01 established the process as policy in one authoritative source, readily available to all personnel and organizations in the system. Each joint pub produced under the new system formed a part of overall joint doctrine.

The joint doctrine development process established new definitions, procedures, processes, and structures—all aimed at producing doctrine that maximized military capabilities by



Troops assembling  
at Port-au-Prince  
airport during Uphold  
Democracy.



Combat Camera Imagery (Val Gempis)

matching concepts to technology, forces, and national goals. The system produced doctrine as authoritative guidance but was not intended to restrict the authority of joint force commanders when organizing forces and executing missions in a manner deemed most appropriate to maintaining unity of effort. Joint Pub 1-01 sets forth the purpose of joint doctrine and JTTP. Doctrine guides the employment of joint forces, provides national positions for combined doctrine (operating with allies), establishes a foundation for joint training, provides a basis for developing instructional material for the professional military education system, and informs other government agencies concerned with the employment of joint forces.

### Key Positions

The revised development process created the joint doctrine working party (JDWP) which is chaired by the chief, Joint Doctrine Division (J-7), as a forum for systematically addressing joint doctrine and JTTP. Its members include representatives from the combatant commands, services, Joint Staff, and selected service schools and senior colleges. JDWP meets every six months

and provides a venue for candid consideration of important joint doctrine and JTTP issues and a means for experienced warfighters to contribute expertise to the development of joint doctrine and JTTP.

Key positions established in Joint Pub 1-01 include lead agent, primary review authority, Joint Staff doctrine sponsor, coordinating review authority, and technical review authority—each providing important input to publication development. Lead agents may be combatant commands, services, or Joint Staff directorates, but regardless they develop, coordinate, review, and maintain the pubs for which they are responsible. Lead agents designate primary review authorities who are responsible for actually developing and maintaining appointed documents. The Joint Staff doctrine sponsors assist lead agents and primary review authorities, coordinating drafts for the Joint Staff and processing final documents for approval. All combatant commands and services as well as the Joint Staff appoint coordinating review authorities, who coordinate with and help primary review authorities develop, evaluate, and maintain publications. In addition, technical review authorities may be designated to provide expertise if deemed necessary. The

process follows a regulated flow designed to allow maximum input from interested parties within the system.

The joint doctrine publication process begins with project proposals that may be submitted by combatant commands, services, or directorates of the Joint Staff and generally are considered at semiannual JDWP meetings. Once accepted, J-7 validates these requirements with the combatant commands and services and then initiates program directives that outline the scope, references, and milestones of the projects. Then the directives are formally coordinated by the Joint Staff together with the combatant commands and services. On approval, they are distributed and the lead agents select primary review authorities to develop the publications.

The primary review authorities develop and staff two drafts with the combatant commands, services, and Joint Staff. The lead agents make every effort to resolve outstanding issues prior to forwarding revised final drafts to the doctrine sponsors on the Joint Staff for final coordination and approval. Lead agents also research and recommend all changes, cancellations, and consolidations of other publications that are affected by promulgation of new documents. This final step ensures integration across the entire system as doctrinal changes force revision to other pubs.

The full cycle results in publications that are fully coordinated and consistent with existing joint doctrine. Recognizing that concepts are important to warfighting performance, the Chairman concluded that doctrine pubs must be accessible, understandable, and user friendly. The legacy of dusty tomes that were only consulted by desperate action officers seeking technical guidance on obscure points contrasts dramatically with pubs today. With greater dissemination of publications, an intensive education effort within the professional military education system, and initiation of the joint doctrine awareness action plan (which includes this JFQ Forum), joint doctrine is spreading its influence more than in the past. The awareness action plan will take advantage of various media to bring doctrine to users. In-

cluded in it are force employment briefing modules, a joint doctrine reference professional library desk set, a professionally produced joint warfighting video, a joint force employment course of instruction, and multimedia CD-ROM. All elements of this ambitious plan are under development and will be available during 1997. Commanders, leaders at all levels, staff members, action officers, and service members everywhere then will have effective tools for understanding both why and how forces are employed.

### the purpose of developing authoritative doctrine is to share knowledge among warfighters

Thinking warfighters are more effective at every level. More important, warfighters who understand the relationship of warfighting concepts are better prepared when faced with new situations.

The purpose of developing and disseminating authoritative doctrine under a well-regulated system is not to issue rigid fighting instructions but rather to share knowledge among warfighters. This knowledge then is internalized for use in decisionmaking regardless of the uniqueness of the situation, rank of the individuals involved, or level of the decision. Moreover, this shared body of knowledge enables those who must implement decisions to use their understanding of the general principles on which they are based to achieve specific goals.

### Keeping Ahead of Change

America's ability to employ forces jointly has increased dramatically over the last ten years. Part of the reason for this preeminence is the overall effect of changes prompted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Besides reorganizing the chain of command, this law resulted in an improved system for proposing, developing, and maintaining joint doctrine. Consequently, many more members of the Armed Forces contribute to the process, thus strengthening the final products. Specific voids are filled. Throughout the process a single philosophy served as

the cornerstone for development: military performance depends as much on concepts for employment as on technology and forces.

The joint publication system has begun to utilize the Internet as well as other technology to promulgate doctrine. For example, *JFQ* can now be accessed on the World Wide Web through the joint doctrine home page (<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine>). This typifies the attempts to keep doctrine ahead of changes. Critical issues develop daily, requiring the system to react and adapt.

Effective employment concepts must complement weapons, force size and composition, training, capabilities, and tactics to produce victory. These concepts, generally known as doctrine, are so pervasive that they are frequently taken for granted. Looking back at campaigns, the casual observer usually sees only results and thinks little about how concepts shaped battlefield events. The influence of conceptual thought on warfare is most apparent when it is absent. One example from World War II, taken from the *Joint Vision 2010* draft "Concept for Future Joint Operations," illustrates this point.

*By the beginning of the war, both the French and the Germans possessed similar armor, aircraft, and communications technologies. Yet their "concepts" for combining and employing these capabilities were remarkably different. Not only were the French inclined to use the tank as an infantry support weapon, but they also did not recognize the value of a rapid-response, highly mobile armored reserve. They spread their tanks along the "impenetrable" Maginot Line, relying on . . . the Ardennes Forest, and the border with Belgium to deny the Germans entry into France.*

*The Germans combined strategic and operational art with an innovative tactical employment concept that integrated aircraft, armored formations, and communications. This allowed them to draw the Allies' attention to the Netherlands, bypass the Maginot Line through the Ardennes, and break out of the forest into France with "blitzkrieg" warfare that caused France to fall within days.*

Examining historical events through a doctrinal lens is useful but is not the total answer to effective doctrine development. As good as doctrine is, it could be better. Furthermore, we must not fall into the trap of thinking we have found the 100 percent solution. As *JV 2010* observes:

*Joint doctrine is a critical ingredient for success because the way in which leaders think and organize their forces will be as important as the technology. . . to conduct future joint operations. Future joint doctrine must articulate the process required for successful joint planning but must be flexible enough . . . to guide our forces in joint and multinational operations. . .*

*We will discover new ways to change the development process for joint doctrine. Thus, we must integrate "top-down" doctrine throughout the development cycle, while continuing to ensure that joint doctrine fully incorporates the strengths that each service brings to joint warfare.*

Our Armed Forces remain preeminent. Many factors contribute to their standing, including technology, military capabilities, and people. Joint doctrine has been the catalyst in bringing these factors together, transporting joint force employment to new heights—and unquestionably making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. **JFQ**